BALLARD ROSENBERG GOLPER & SAVITT LLP 500 NORTH BRAND BOULEVARD, TWENTIETH FLOOR GLENDALE, CA 91203-9946

Government Code § 6103; appearance fees not required

[Assigned to Hon, Joanne O'Donnell, Dept. 37] [Discovery Referee: Hon. Diane Wayne, Ret.]

DEFENDANT'S MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION TO PLAINTIFF STEVE KARAGIOSIAN'S MOTION TO COMPEL FURTHER RESPONSES TO DOCUMENT

March 11, 2010 10:00 a.m.

May 28, 2009 July 6, 2010

I. Introduction

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Plaintiff Steve Karagiosian's ("Plaintiff's") Motion to Compel makes no attempt whatsoever to establish "good cause" for compelling Defendant City of Burbank ("Defendant") to produce "any and all DOCUMENTS, WRITINGS, and/or RECORDS that RELATE TO, refer to, describe, or pertain to" nine individuals who were arrested by the Burbank Police Department ("BPD"). Plaintiff also fails to overcome any of Defendant's objections to his document requests, including the fact that the requested documents pertain to ongoing law enforcement investigations and are privileged from disclosure. And Plaintiff does not even address, let alone purport to satisfy, the additional mandatory prerequisites for obtaining production of police officer personnel documents, which his overbroad requests explicitly seek. (See Pitchess v. Superior Court (1974) 11 Cal.3d 531; Pen. Code, § 832.7(a); Evid. Code, § 1043 et seq.) Separately and together, these glaring deficiencies are more than enough to require that Plaintiff's motion be denied in its entirety.

Plaintiff argues that Defendant somehow opened the door for his overbroad document requests simply by showing him booking photographs of the nine arrestees and asking him about the arrestees during his deposition. But Plaintiff conveniently neglects to mention that he refused to answer any substantive questions regarding any arrestee who he recalled taking into custody, and instead he invoked the Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination and various other objections. (See Deft's Motion to Compel Pltf Karagiosian to Answer Depo. Questions, filed Feb. 25, 2010.) Thus, it is Plaintiff, not Defendant, who impermissibly seeks to use discovery privileges "as a sword and a shield." (Pltf's Motion to Compel Further Responses [etc.] ("Motion"), p. 3.) Given Plaintiff's refusal to testify, he cannot establish that "any and all" arrestee documents are relevant or calculated to lead to admissible evidence – let alone that any claimed relevance of such documents overcomes Defendant's multiple, legitimate objections to their disclosure.

Remarkably, Plaintiff alternatively seeks an evidentiary sanction precluding Defendant from offering any evidence relating to the arrestees. This is patently improper. Evidentiary sanctions are available, if at all, only for violation of a court order compelling document production. No such order has been issued, and Plaintiff has not established that he is entitled to this discovery in the first instance. Thus, Plaintiff's motion should be denied in its entirety.

II. PLAINTIFF MAKES NO EFFORT TO SHOW "GOOD CAUSE" FOR DOCUMENT PRODUCTION

It is "black-letter" law that a motion to compel production of documents must "set forth specific facts showing good cause justifying the discovery sought by the demand." (Code Civ. Proc., § 2031.310(b)(1), emphasis added; all undesignated section references herein are to the Code of Civil Procedure.) Thus, it was Plaintiff's affirmative burden "to provide evidence from which [this Court] may determine" that the requested discovery "... either is itself admissible in evidence or appears reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence." (Calcor Space Facility, Inc. v. Superior Court (1997) 53 Cal.App.4th 216, 223, emphasis added, quoting former Code Civ. Proc. § 2017(a) [now § 2017.010].) Mere argument and conclusions are legally insufficient to show good cause for production of documents. (Calcor, at p. 224.)

Plaintiff does not even address the threshold "good cause" requirement in his motion, let alone attempt to satisfy it. *This is a sufficient and mandatory basis*, by itself, to deny the motion under section 2031.310(b)(1).

Indeed, the only facts stated in Plaintiff's motion are that in his deposition, he was: (1) shown BPD "booking photographs" of the nine arrestees; and (2) "asked a series of questions about each individual who was pictured" – i.e., whether Plaintiff was involved in their arrests and knew or reported anything regarding use of force on the persons. (Motion, p. 3:4-10.) But Plaintiff avoids informing this Court that *he refused to provide substantive answers as to any arrestee who he recalled taking into custody*, and instead objected based on the Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination and other grounds. The following is a summary of Plaintiff's deposition responses, objections and refusals to answer regarding the nine arrestees:

- Oscar Aguilera (Pltf. Sep. Stmt., Req. for Prod. of Doc. Nos. 1-2 ("RPD 1-2")) Plaintiff admitted arresting him, but *refused to answer* any questions regarding use of force or taking him into custody (Cischke Decl., Exh. A, pp. 425:22-433:24).
- <u>Jesse Aguirre</u> (RPD 3-4) Plaintiff denied knowing of any involvement in his arrest or how his apparent injury came about (*id.*, Exh. A, pp. 433:25-435:17).
- <u>Lucio Estrada</u> (RPD 5-6) Plaintiff denied knowing of any involvement in taking him into custody or how his apparent injury came about (*id.*, Exh. A, pp. 435:18-437:2).

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- Jens Bryan Majano Plaintiff denied being involved in taking him into custody or knowing about use of force against him (RPD 7-8) (id., Exh. A, pp. 437:3-439:3).
- Manuel Estrada (RPD 9-10) Plaintiff denied knowing who he is or who caused him injury (id., Exh. A, p. 439:4-18).
- Jose Luis Guevara (RPD 11-12) Plaintiff refused to answer any questions about taking him into custody or use of force (id., Exh. A, pp. 439:19-441:14).
- Rene Escarsega (RPD 13-14) Plaintiff denied being involved in taking him into custody or knowing about use of force against him, and refused to answer whether he observed any BPD officers use force in taking him into custody (id., Exh. A, pp. 441:15-444:7).
- Ray Govea (RPD 15-16) Plaintiff denied knowing who he is or who caused him injury (id., Exh. A, pp. 444:8-445:10).
- Jose Luis Alvarenga Plaintiff refused to answer any questions about taking him into custody or use of force (RPD 17-18) (id., Exh. A, pp. 445:11-448:19).

Plaintiff offers no legal support for suggesting that his requests are justified simply by Defendant's deposition questioning and use of booking photos during the deposition. (See Motion, pp. 3-4.) Instead, Plaintiff's deposition answers – and refusals to answer, which are the subject of a motion to compel Defendant filed on February 25, 2010 - show that Plaintiff has no factual basis to conclude that any documents regarding the nine arrestees are either relevant or calculated to lead to admissible evidence.

This is particularly true given the vast scope of documents Plaintiff seeks – i.e., "any and all DOCUMENTS, WRITINGS, and/or RECORDS that RELATE TO, refer to, describe, or pertain to" each of the nine arrestees, "including without limitation" various examples. (RPD 1-18.) Such "blanket demand[s]" hardly constitute the "reasonable' particularity" required under section 2017.210. (Calcor, supra, 53 Cal.App.4th at p. 222 [granting writ relief where subpoena sought production of essentially "everything in your possession which in any way relates to gun mounts"].) Plaintiff's requests are not calculated at all. He fails to show the required "good cause" for Courtordered production of "any and all" arrestee documents he seeks. This is sufficient, by itself, to require that Plaintiff's motion be denied in its entirety.

III. PLAINTIFF IS NOT ENTITLED TO THE RECORDS AS OFFICIAL INFORMATION

Because Plaintiff has failed to establish "good cause" for Court-compelled production of documents, this Court need not even address Defendant's objections to Plaintiff's requests. In any event, Plaintiff cannot overcome these objections.

Plaintiff's requests *explicitly seek*, "without limitation," documents pertaining to investigations, such as "follow-up investigations, use of force investigation reports" and various other events "as a result of said investigation/arrests." (RPD 1-18.) Moreover, when asked in his deposition about his use of force in taking one of the nine arrestees into custody, Plaintiff replied, "It's an ongoing investigation, and I'm not allowed to talk about it." (Cischke Decl., Exh. A, pp. 425:22-426:2, emphasis added.) As Plaintiff implicitly concedes, there are ongoing law enforcement investigations pertaining to all nine arrestees. While Plaintiff is incorrect that he is "not allowed to talk" at all about such investigations (see Deft's Motion to Compel), there are statutory privileges against disclosure of documents pertaining to such investigations.

"Records of complaints to, or investigations conducted by, ... any state or local police agency, ... or any investigatory or security files compiled by any other state or local agency for correctional, law enforcement, or licensing purposes," are *exempt from disclosure* under the California Public Records Act ("CPRA"). (Gov. Code, § 6254(f).) Furthermore, an agency "shall justify withholding any record by demonstrating that the record in question is exempt under express provisions of this chapter or that on the facts of the particular case the public interest served by not disclosing the record clearly outweighs the public interest served by disclosure of the record." (Gov. Code, § 6255(a).)

As the Supreme Court has recognized, this exemption encompasses "investigations undertaken for the purpose of determining whether a violation of law may occur or has occurred. If a violation or potential violation is detected, the exemption also extends to records of investigations conducted for the purpose of uncovering information surrounding the commission of the violation and its agency." (*Haynie v. Superior Court* (2001) 26 Cal.4th 1061, 1071.)

Plaintiff seeks to distinguish *Haynie* solely on the grounds that it did not involve a situation "where the government first released documents regarding individuals who had been arrested, asked

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questions about the arrests during a deposition, and then refused to produce additional documents under an assertion of privacy rights." (Motion, p. 4.) In fact, however, the law enforcement agency in Haynie (the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department) did release "certain information" regarding the traffic stop at issue in a "summary of the event." (Haynie, supra, 26 Cal.4th at p. 1065.) The Supreme Court nevertheless held that "the Court of Appeal erred in directing disclosure of the records in question and in ordering the County to create a log of documents exempt from disclosure." (Id. at p. 1064.) Clearly, then, Haynie does not support Plaintiff's implication that Defendant somehow waived any objections to disclosure of the requested investigation documents simply by showing Plaintiff photos and asking him questions about the arrestees.

Plaintiff also ignores several other objections asserted by Defendant in response to the document requests. In particular, Defendant objected under Evidence Code section 1040, which provides in pertinent part as follows:

- As used in this section, 'official information' means information acquired in confidence by a public employee in the course of his or her duty and not open, or officially disclosed, to the public prior to the time the claim of privilege is made.
- A public entity has a privilege to refuse to disclose official information, and to prevent another from disclosing official information, if the privilege is claimed by a person authorized by the public entity to do so and:
- Disclosure is forbidden by an act of the Congress of the United States "(1) or a statute of this state; or
- Disclosure of the information is against the public interest because there is a necessity for preserving the confidentiality of the information that outweighs the necessity for disclosure in the interest of justice; but no privilege may be claimed under this paragraph if any person authorized to do so has consented that the information be disclosed in the proceeding. In determining whether disclosure of the information is against the public interest, the interest of the public entity as a party in the outcome of the proceeding may not be considered."

Here, disclosure of "any and all" documents pertaining to the arrestees is not only forbidden under the specific statutes discussed herein, but also would be "against the public interest" in preserving the confidentiality of ongoing law enforcement investigations, as specifically recognized in Haynie.

Defendant also objected under Penal Code section 841.5(a), which provides that absent specific exceptions not applicable here, "no law enforcement officer or employee of a law

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enforcement agency shall disclose to any arrested person, or to any person who may be a defendant in a criminal action, the address or telephone number of any person who is a victim or witness in the alleged offense." (Emphasis added. See also Pen. Code, § 964 [directing in each county the establishment of "a mutually agreeable procedure to protect confidential personal information regarding any witness or victim contained in a police report, arrest report, or investigative report"].) Plaintiff does not, and cannot, dispute that his requests are broad enough to include documentation of the addresses and telephone numbers of the nine arrestees, who plainly qualify as "witness[es] in the alleged offense[s]." This is an additional prohibition against compelled disclosure of the requested documents.

Defendant further objected under Penal Code section 13300, which addresses disclosure of "local summary criminal history information" ... pertaining to the identification and criminal history of any person, such as name, date of birth, physical description, dates of arrests, arresting agencies and booking numbers, charges, dispositions, and similar data about the person." (Pen. Code, § 13300(a)(1).) This statute provides that a local law enforcement agency "shall furnish local summary criminal history information to any" of 16 specified categories of entities or persons. Parties to civil lawsuits are not among these specified categories. (Pen. Code, § 13300(b)(1)-(16).)

Notably, this statute also provides "that when information is furnished to assist an agency, officer, or official of state or local government, a public utility, or any entity, in fulfilling employment, certification, or licensing duties, Chapter 1321 of the Statutes of 1974 and Section 432.7 of the Labor Code shall apply." (Pen. Code, § 13300(b).) Labor Code section 432.7(a) prohibits employers from asking job applicants to disclose any "information concerning an arrest or detention that did not result in conviction, or information concerning a referral to, and participation in, any pretrial or posttrial diversion program," and prohibits such information from being sought or utilized as a factor in any employment decision. Penal Code section 13300 and Labor Code section 432.7 thus further underscore the confidential and sensitive nature of documents and other information pertaining to ongoing law enforcement investigations.

Plaintiff's attempt to overcome Defendant's objections to disclosure of the requested investigation documents is flimsy, incomplete and unavailing. His motion should be denied.

IV. PLAINTIFF IGNORES THE PITCHESS PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING POLICE PERSONNEL

RECORDS

In addition to their vast overbreadth, Plaintiff's requests *explicitly seek* certain personnel documents, "including without limitation ... documentation of discipline administered" and "awards and commendations issued as a result of said investigation/arrests." (RPD 1-18.) Defendant specifically objected to Plaintiff's requests under Penal Code section 832.7(a) and Evidence Code section 1043 et seq., which codify the threshold burdens for seeking production of information in police personnel files set forth in *Pitchess*, *supra*, 11 Cal.3d 531. (See Pltf. Sep. Stmt., p. 2 and *passim*. See also Deft. Sep. Stmt., filed herewith.) *But Plaintiff does not even address Defendant's objections under the Pitchess statutes, let alone attempt to overcome those objections*.

It is well-settled that "the specific Evidence Code procedures relating to discovery of peace officer personnel records take precedence over the general discovery rules outlined in the Code of Civil Procedure." (County of Los Angeles v. Superior Court (Uhley) (1990) 219 Cal.App.3d 1605, 1611.) Even if Plaintiff had sought to establish "good cause" for production of documents (which he did not, see pp. 2-3, above), this "is only the first hurdle" on a Pitchess motion; the court still must thereafter review any potentially relevant records in chambers, balancing the interests in discovery against each officer's right to confidentiality. (City of Santa Cruz v. Municipal Court (1989) 49 Cal.3d 74, 84.)

In particular, Penal Code section 832.7(a) provides that peace officer "personnel records" (as defined in section 832.8), "or information obtained from these records, are *confidential and shall not be disclosed in any criminal or civil proceeding except by discovery pursuant to Sections 1043 and 1046 of the Evidence Code*," or except in the context of certain investigations or proceedings conducted by a grand jury, the District Attorney or the Attorney General. (Emphasis added.) A *Pitchess* motion for discovery of police officer personnel records "shall" be accompanied by, among other things, "[a]ffidavits showing good cause for the discovery or disclosure sought, setting forth the materiality thereof to the subject matter involved in the pending litigation" (Evid. Code, § 1043(b)(3), emphasis added.) It is irrelevant whether the requested information could be culled from other sources; "there is nothing in the statutory scheme or its history suggesting a

legislative intent to exclude from the privilege information which happens to be obtainable elsewhere." (*Hackett v. Superior Court* (1993) 13 Cal.App.4th 96, 99, italics in original.)

Having ignored the "good cause" requirement for compelled production of documents, Plaintiff likewise ignores and fails to satisfy the more specific requirements for production of peace officer personnel records under the *Pitchess* statutes. In particular, the declaration of Plaintiff's counsel does not purport to show that the requested discovery is "material" to the subject matter of this case. At a minimum, then, this Court should deny Plaintiff's motion to the extent it seeks production of peace officer personnel records.

V. PLAINTIFF OBVIOUSLY IS NOT ENTITLED TO AN EVIDENTIARY SANCTION

Plaintiff asks this Court "in the alternative" to preclude Defendant "from offering any evidence during trial, or in any summary judgment motion, regarding the individuals who are the subjects of the [document] requests." (Motion, p. 2.) To say the least, Plaintiff seeks to place "the cart before the horse." Section 2031.310 – under which Plaintiff's motion was brought – clearly *prohibits his request for evidentiary sanctions*.

Instead, on an initial motion to compel such as Plaintiff's, a court may only "impose a monetary sanction" against the losing party, unless that party "acted with substantial justification or that other circumstances make the imposition of the sanction unjust." (Code Civ. Proc., § 2031.310(h).) Plaintiff does not seek a monetary sanction and does not accuse Defendant of acting without substantial justification.

Only "if a party fails to obey an order compelling further response" may the court then impose "an evidence sanction" or such other "orders that are just." (Code Civ. Proc., § 2031.310(i); accord, Kravitz v. Superior Court (2001) 91 Cal.App.4th 1015, 1021 ["issue, evidence, and terminating sanctions must all be preceded by the abuser's disobedience of an order compelling him to do that which he should have done in the first instance"].) Because the Court has not even ruled on Plaintiff's entitlement to the discovery he requests, Plaintiff is prohibited by statute from obtaining evidentiary sanctions.

The cases cited by Plaintiff do not, and could not, hold otherwise. (Motion, p. 3.) None of those cases discussed the language in Section 2031.310(h) and (i) prohibiting the imposition of

evidence sanctions unless and until a party has violated a court order compelling discovery. Instead, all three cases discussed orders precluding a party from "introducing evidence at trial or by motion to support or oppose designated claims or defenses to which [his] refusal to answer questions or produce documents whether by invoking [the] Fifth Amendment privilege or otherwise [related]." (Dwyer v. Crocker National Bank (1987) 194 Cal.App.3d 1418, 1432; see In re Marriage of Hoffmeister (1984) 161 Cal.App.3d 1163, 1171 [dicta].) As noted in one of the cases, the Fifth Amendment context is qualitatively different than other situations because "a court may not issue an order compelling incriminating testimony," and therefore "would be rendered powerless to deal with the situation" unless it could preemptively preclude evidence relating to the invocation of the privilege. (A&M Records, Inc. v. Heilman (1977) 75 Cal.App.3d 554, 567, fn. 8, emphasis added.)

Outside the Fifth Amendment context, Section 2031.310 clearly precludes Plaintiff from obtaining any evidentiary sanction before obtaining an order compelling production of the requested documents. And because Plaintiff has neither established "good cause" for such production nor overcome Defendant's objections, he is entitled to no relief at all.

VI. CONCLUSION

Defendant respectfully asks this Court to deny Plaintiff's motion in its entirety.

DATED: February 26, 2010

BALLARD, ROSENBERG, GOLPER & SAVITT LLP

By:

John J. Manier

Attorneys for Defendant CITY OF BURBANK, including the Police Department of the City of Burbank

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

I am employed in the County of Los Angeles, State of California. I am over the age of eighteen years and not a party to the within action; my business address is 500 North Brand Boulevard, 20th Floor, Glendale, California 91203-9946.

PROOF OF SERVICE

On February 26, 2010, I served the following document(s) described as **DEFENDANT'S OPPOSITION TO PLAINTIFF STEVE KARAGIOSIAN'S MOTION TO COMPEL FURTHER RESPONSES TO DISCOVERY REQUESTS [ETC.]** on the interested parties in this action by placing true copies thereof enclosed in sealed envelopes addressed as follows:

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I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on February 26, 2010, at Glendale, California.

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